

ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES DRESSED FOR BUSINESS

8 Guidelines for Summertime Dress Codes

A female employee walked across the showroom at the car dealer sporting flip-flops. At a daycare playground, while minding the children, the teacher's assistant was catching some rays in a swimsuit top. In an office, a pregnant woman's bare tummy was exposed in a revealing camisole.

These employees are all representing local businesses, yet what message are they sending? Are they going to work or going to the beach?

Although dress codes might be relaxed during the dog days of summer, employees CAN dress casually without compromising their level of professionalism.

"We try to maintain a professional image all year round while still allowing a business casual dress code", said Sherri Z. Model, vice president of Model Consulting in Trevoese. "The summer months may require some extra thought especially with shoes (as flip-flops are just not appropriate)."

What is acceptable attire for one company might not work for another. Business owners must establish clear-cut guidelines.

1. Comfort level – How relaxed should the dress code be? A good rule to follow - "If you would wear it to the beach, then don't wear it to work."
2. Levels of dress - Are all areas of the organization required to dress the same? Should there be different rules for managers, field workers, office staff, etc?
3. Fashion jargon - Know the difference between various styles of clothing so that employees understand (camisole, tank top).
4. Code rules – Be explicit in every detail from head to toe. Employees could interpret differently (skirts to be 3" above knee, no cleavage, no clinging fabrics)
5. Details matter – Include rules for accessories, grooming (hairstyles, facial hair, manicures, pedicures), body art and piercing
6. Educate employees – Hire a professional to give a workshop demonstrating the correct modes of dress. An outside source can deliver the message more effectively.
7. Dress-down day - Select one day that is the most casual with exceptions only to be worn on these days.
8. Give consequences – Be prepared to counsel employees for not following policy (sending employee home to change, written warning).

"Employees need to make choices that still maintain a proper business look," said Ms. Model.

Creating appropriate dress policies ensures that employees are focused on business which results in greater productivity. Happy summer!

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